

## Interview H0023: with Shatra Rimshi Ganden Paljor [tib. bshad sgra rim bzhi dga' ldan dpal 'byor], (India, August 21, 1981) : Part No. 1 of 6

*Shatra was a well known aristocratic official from one of the highest and wealthiest families in Tibet. In this interview he talks about the death of the 13th Dalai Lama. He gives an excellent and detailed explanation of how the Tibetan Government's Intermediate Assembly worked, as well as an important analysis regarding the conflict between Lungshar, Kunphela and Trimön over who should take power after the death of the Dalai Lama.*

Q

Where were you when the 13th Dalai Lama died?

A

I was in the Po [tib. spo bo] area of Tibet near Kongpo at Demo Dekyi Khangsar [tib de mo bde skyid khang gsar] when I heard the news. I heard that the favorite of the Dalai Lama, Jensal Kunphela [tib. spyen bsal kun 'phel lags] was banished to Chamnang [tib. chab nag].

Q

How did you hear of the death?

A

My father received a special urgent government message from the Provincial Headquarters in Chamdo informing him of the death of the 13th Dalai Lama. At that time, I saw that there were butter lamps being offered everywhere in the town --it was like at the [Ganden Ngamjö](#) festival.

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Q

Did you hear any rumors of the death through travelers or through townspeople or from anywhere before you heard the official information?

A

I didn't hear anything from any source except the official information that was received from Chamdo. I think that they received this letter in the 11th month of the Tibetan calendar. According to the government edict, everybody had to wear the "dress of mourning." According to the Tibetan tradition that meant that everyone, man, woman, child and monk, had to wear dark clothes and remove their head dresses, earrings and all other ornaments from their body. Also, they had to remove the religious banners or prayer flags from their houses. For 49 days people were banned from singing, playing music, and dancing. Also the shambu [tib. sham bu] (decorations on the top of windows) were banned as were noisy decorations used on horses and mules such as bells. All buildings, monasteries, and individual houses had to burn butter lamps. Although the government edict mentions all of the above, mostly the people did this voluntarily. The government also made offerings to the monasteries and to the temples (so that they would do prayers). The instructions were sent from Lhasa to Chamdo and were then sent out to districts under Chamdo. Each district head (tib. [dzongpön](#) [rdzong dpon]) issued a government order to the various monasteries and other important institutions and individuals under his control.

According to the Tibetan tradition, when an important Lama died, a prayer was written for his speedy return (tib. nyurjon [tmyur byon]). At that time, the Dalai Lama's poem [hat](#) not yet been written. However, they had a short 4 line prayer saying: "The combination of love and knowledge/ The reincarnation who has the wisdom, morality, and compassion/ The young incarnate Lama who is the precious gem/ May you return to the earth as soon as possible" [tib. mkhyen brtse bdag nyid rje btsun spyen ras gzigs/ dpal ldan mkhas btsun bzang po'i 'bras bu can/ bla ma mchog gi yid bzhin nor/ blo bzang bstan pa' dpal du myur byon shog]. This short poem was written by the Desi Sangye Gyatsho [tib. sde srsid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho] who was the first Prime Minister of the Dalai Lama's government before and after the death of the 5th Dalai Lama. He wrote this poem after the death of the 5th Dalai Lama and made the people who were building the Potala sing the song and carve its words on the walls of the Potala. This poem became famous and the moment a Dalai

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Lama died, it was customary to say it. Thus, the government edict reminded people to carry on the tradition of saying this prayer as much as possible.

Q

You said that you met Kunphela when he was in the Chamnag area in Kongpo. What did you hear about Kunphela, the "Favorite" of the 13th Dalai Lama and one of the most powerful men in Tibet? Why was he exiled there?

A

When the 13th Dalai Lama became sick, Kunphela kept it a secret and did not inform either the [silön](#) or the [kashag](#) or any other responsible government officer. That was one of his faults. He said that he kept it secret not on his own, but because he was acting under the instructions of the 13th Dalai Lama. It was stated that every 24th of the 10th month of the Tibetan calendar, The Dalai Lama gave a public interview to the [Gyüdö](#) (Upper Tantric College).

Q

Was he sick for a long time before that?

A

Before that, he had a kind of cold for about 20 days. That year, on the 24th of the 10th month he gave this public audience [tib. ljong rgyu] to the Upper Tantric College even though he was sick. However, after this, he became worse.

The next day, the 25th of the 10th month, was the holiday called Ganden Ngamchö, which is the Death Anniversary of [Tsongkapa](#), the founder of the Yellow Hat sect who died in 1419. It is considered to be one of the most important festivals in Tibet and on that day the Dalai Lama normally gives a public audience especially meant for the [Gyüme](#) (Lower Tantric College) monks [tib. rgyud smad] However on the 25th he could not appear for the [Gyüme](#) audience and it became quite clear to Kunphela that he could no longer take responsibility for keeping the illness a secret. He then informed the [silön](#) and [kashag](#) that the Dalai Lama was sick and that until now he had kept his sickness a secret on the instructions of the 13th Dalai Lama himself.

They immediately followed Tibetan tradition and asked some important lamas to go and request the Dalai Lama to live a long [life]. They found two lamas who were important to

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the public and also favorites of the Dalai Lama himself. These were Triu Trisur Champa Chödrak [tib [tre](#) hor khri zur byams pa chos grags] [He was the reincarnation of the teacher of the 13th Dalai Lama]. So with these two lamas, the [kashag](#), led by the [silön](#), went to the room of the 13th Dalai Lama to request him to stay alive a longer period. The Dalai Lama let the two lamas in, but not the [silön](#) and the [kashag](#). However, he did not promise to the two incarnate lamas [that he would live longer]. As a result, the [kashag](#) decided to go to Potala Palace where there was an image of Avaloketisvara, the deity of love and compassion, and prayed for the longevity of the Dalai Lama [since the Dalai Lama is the reincarnation of Avaloketisvara]. That was the first action they took.

The second step they took, as tradition dictated, concerned the state oracle [Nechung](#) [tib. gnas chung]. Normally when the Dalai Lama was not well, the State Oracle went into trance and requested the Dalai Lama to live long. This time also the [kashag](#) sent a note to [Nechung](#) Monastery asking the State Oracle to come into trance and request that the Dalai Lama live a longer period. At almost the same time, the [Nechung](#) medium came [i.e., came into trance without being invoked].

Normally, when the medium comes into trance there is a written invocation, but the thongbeb [tib. thog 'bebs] is an instant, unplanned appearance [in trance] without any ritual invocation. The deity appeared instantly to the [Nechung](#) medium and gave instructions to the medium's servants that they should bring his medicine [bag](#). The medium of [Nechung](#) was named Gowo Chusur [tib. go [bo](#) chos zur] and he also practiced Tibetan medicine a little bit. Then the medium went to the [Norbulinga](#) palace where the Dalai Lama and the physician to the Dalai Lama called Amchi Jampala [tib. am chi byams pa lags] were. The deity came into trance through the oracle and said the cold medicine Chamjom Pawo Judun [tib. [cham](#) 'joms dpa' [bo](#) bcu bdun] is to be given to the 13th Dalai Lama. The [deity through the] oracle said, "I have this medicine with my servant of my oracle and he took this medicine and [Nechung](#) himself offered the medicine to the Dalai Lama and said "Please have this! Please have this!" After a little while, however, the Dalai Lama's condition further worsened and he couldn't talk. Then it was definite that he was not going to live.

Q

I further heard that when the [Nechung](#) oracle offered the 13th Dalai Lama the medicine, Chambala was standing by and said the medicine was wrong. Is that so?

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A

I did not hear that. What I heard is that when the 13th Dalai Lama died, the [Nechung](#) oracle offered him the medicine, but that Chambala, the doctor, was not near by. Anyway, thereafter, the 13th Dalai Lama's condition worsened and it was almost certain he was going to live no longer. He died on the 30th of the 10th month of the Tibetan Calendar. When the Dalai Lama died, the Tibetan government issued a statement saying that this Dalai Lama has left his body and left for Nirvana [tib. sku mya ngan las 'das].

At that time, the people said that before that when he was taking the medicine from doctor Jampala, nothing happened, but this times, because [Nechung](#) offered the medicine, he died. The Dalai Lama's personal attendant, Kunphela, had kept the sickness a secret for some period so that the people of Tibet, the monasteries, the monks, the lay people and the government could not offer prayers and couldn't do a satisfied longevity ritual for the longevity for the Dalai Lama. So the oracle and Kunphela were involved in that. Earlier, I should have mentioned that the following also had been done. One day the [kashag](#) led by the [silön](#) (prime minister) went and prostrated at the front of the image of Avaloketisvara and said the prayer phagdö [tib. 'phags stod]. At that time, all government officers [lay and monk] and probably the abbots of the three great monasteries prayed for the longevity for the Dalai Lama.

Immediately after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama, the [silön](#) and the [kashag](#) [tib srid bka' zung sbrel] called the Intermediate Assembly [tib. tshogs 'du hrag bsdus rgyas pa] and informed the Assembly about the Dalai Lama's death. The Assembly said that they did not know anything of the Dalai Lama's sickness until he became very seriously ill. They also further stated that Kunphela had not informed the [kashag](#) or the [silön](#) or the [drönyerchemmo](#) (Lord Chamberlain) so a larger number of prayers were not able to be offered by the individual ministries and government. However, once they found out, they did everything they could as stated before. This was explained to the Assembly.

Q

What does the Intermediate Assembly mean? Who led the meeting? How was the agenda prepared? Who were the members who attended? What were their sitting arrangements, etc.?

A

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The [kashag](#), [drönyerchemmo](#) and [silön](#) did not attend the Assembly meetings. They were jointly led by the 4 trunyichemmo of the yigtsang and the 4 tsipön of the [tsikhang](#) (tib. Trungtsigye [drung rtsis brgyad]). These eight officials led the meeting, had the most responsibility, and acted as chairmen and administrators of the meeting. Also present in the Assembly were the nominated representatives from the third rank, [dzasa](#) [tib. dza sag] and Theiji [tib. thai ji], and the fourth rank (tib. [rimshi](#) [rim bzhi]). There were also representatives of the junior fourth rank (tib. senamba [sras nam pa]) [sons of the families who had previously been ministers] and representatives of the senior fourth rank monk officials (tib. [khenche](#) [mkhan che]), and the junior fourth rank monk officials (tib. [khenjung](#) [mkhan chung]). There also were representatives of the fifth rank monk and lay officials (tib. tseshö letsenba [rtse shod las tshan pa]) and representatives of the ordinary officials (tib. kyüma [dkyus ma]). Also two representatives of Ganden [tib. dga' ldan] Monastery attended the meeting. Since Ganden was far from Lhasa, they had 2 representatives always stationed in Lhasa.

Q

Since you mentioned the nominated representatives of the dzasag and those other officials, do you mean to say that all the dzasag and those officials didn't have to attend the meeting?

A

Yes. All of them do not have to attend the meeting. Only about 2 representatives from the various ranks were nominated and they had to attend the [Assembly] meeting.

Q

Were those representatives elected by the group itself or were they appointed? How did they select who attended the meeting?

A

The representatives were not selected or elected by their group. If you were a lay official, the candidates of the lay official representatives were selected by the [kashag](#) and approved either by the regent or the Dalai Lama. For the candidates of the monk officials, the yigtsang selected names from each rank and then submitted them for approval. After all were approved, their names were announced.

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With regards to how they informed the members about the meetings, the [kashag](#) sent a note to Drepung Monastery addressed to the Phodrag Depa [tib. pho brang sde pa]. He in turn informed the Abbots and ex-Abbots about the meeting. For Sera Monastery, the Kashag sent a note addressed to the Simkhang Depa [tib. gzim khang sde pa] who informed the abbots of the different colleges of Sera. As to the two representatives of the abbots of Ganden, the [kashag](#) sent note to their house and informed them. For the rest of the officials, if you were a lay official, the [tsikhang](#) sent information; if you were a monk officer, the yigtsang notified you. The day after this notification, the Assembly started.

Q

Where does the Assembly meet? Did they have a separate building?

A

No. When they meet in [Norbulinga](#), it was at the Shabten Lhakhang [tib. zhabs brtan lha khang]. In the Potala, it was met in the hall called Dendenkhyil [tib. bde ldan 'khyil] where they used to hold the ritual for the blessing vase [tib. bum sgrub]. When they met in Lhasa, they met in the hall called Ewam [tib. e wam] located near the Tsuglakhang [tib. gtsug [lag](#) khang]. They didn't have a separate building for this meeting.

Q

What was the sitting arrangement of this meeting? Was it arranged?

A

The sitting arrangement of the Assembly was fixed. The highest ranking officials were the representatives of [dzasa](#) and [theiji](#) rank [both were equal]. Their seats were in the center looking toward the main door. The Tibetan custom is normally for the important seats to face the door. The seat was not very high and had an ordinary cushion on top of which was a cushion covered with brocade. On the right side they had ordinary seats covered with brocade. These were used by the eight Trungtsi. They were the major power holding people in the meeting, yet they do not sit in the center because the [dzasa](#) and [theiji](#) ranked higher. When the [dzasa](#) and [theiji](#) met ceremonially in the meeting, they did not show respect to each other by taking their hats off and doing the chambü [tib. phyag 'bul] greeting, but others had to take their hats off. However, although their rank was equal, there was a difference between their tables. The tables in front of the [dzasa](#) were known



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as the dzajok [tib. dza lcog]. These were old style Tibetan tables with no carved designs [only painted ones]. They were about 14 inches high. The theiji's table was known as the theijok [tib. tha' lcog] and was smaller than the dzajok. If you just looked at the meeting without knowing anything, based on the sitting arrangement it would look as if the [dzasa](#) and [theiji](#) were the most important figures and were presiding over the meeting although in reality, they didn't have any power. The power was in the hands of the 8 [trungtsi](#). The senior-most trunyichemmo was known as the trunyichemmo [ta lama](#) [tib. ta bla ma], He ranked higher than the other members of the yigtsang. He was equal to the [dzasa](#) and [theiji](#) so he got an extra brocade cushion and a different table.

Sitting on the left hand side of the room were all the abbots. The order was first the Drepung abbots, then Sera, and then Ganden. Usually, sitting behind the [trungtsi](#), were the [khenche](#) and [khenjung](#), the [rimshi](#), [senampa](#) followed by the lay officials up to the letsenba [if the latter didn't sit behind the abbots]. Ordinarily the "ordinary" government officials sat behind the abbots. Up to the level of [khenjung](#), there were brocade seats. From there down to the "ordinary" officials there were just plain cushions called kyüden [tib. dkyus gdan] made from woolen material. This was called the Intermediate General Assembly. At the front of the abbots and the trunyichemmo they had green tables called tsinjang [tib. rtsi ljang] which had a coin design on them. The height of the tables were around 5-6 inches. The official above the [senampa](#) had the brocade cushion called gökyong [tib. gos skyong] and the officials below the [senampa](#) had a rug cushion, drumden [tib. grum gdan].

Whenever they held a meeting, first the tea would be served. This was like the saying, "do not discuss matters with an empty mouth" [tib. kha stong pa la gros mi byed]. Then the [tsampa](#) would be served and the representatives would eat [tsampa](#) dough [mix tea with their [tsamba](#) and knead the mixture into balls]. Then the [trungtsi](#) would explain the reason for holding the meeting.

Q

Didn't the [silön](#) have any involvement with the assembly?

A

The [silön](#) were above the [kashag](#). The [trungtsi](#) would say, "according to the order from the [kashag](#)." And the senior trunyichemmo would put forward the agenda of the meeting.



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There would be about 50-60 members in that Assembly and the representative would express their opinions.

Q

It is customary for Tibetans to keep silent for awhile when they hold meetings. Did they do that in the assembly?

A

Yes, they would keep silent for awhile and then the talk would start from among the [trungtsi](#), and then from the abbots and then they would discuss it quite frankly. When the matter was almost kind of taking shape, the [trungtsi](#) would make a draft on a [samtra](#) slate-surfaced writing board [tib. sam khra]. Some of them would dictate and some of them would write and then exchange them with each other. Then one of the [trungtsi](#) would read the draft and they would discuss and make corrections. Finally, when it was confirmed, about 4 selected scribes [tib. yig 'bri] who were not assembly members would copy the decision onto paper.

Q

Did they have to finish copying the decision before the meeting was adjourned?

A

There is a special point we must mention here because it was customary for all the decisions to be written in final form before the meeting was adjourned. If the written decision document was not finished, the Assembly members would wait outside until they were finished writing it. When the document was ready, the members were recalled and the document was read to them and compared with the initial draft. After this comparison, the official seals [tib. spyi dam] were put on the document.

Q

Was there an official seal or would the Trungtsi and abbots put on their own seals?

A

There was a separate seal called the "general seal." There were [actually] four seals used. The first was the seal of the Drepung [Laji](#). The second was the seal of the Sera [Laji](#).

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Third was the seal of the Ganden representatives, and the fourth was the seal known as the "general seal" (tib. jidam [spyi dam]) which represented the lay and monk officials. It was called the "Seal of the General Monk and Lay Officials" [tib. rtse shod drung spyi dam phrug].

Q

Who would affix this seal?

A

The Trungtsi would put on the seal. The seals of the three monasteries were round and black.

Q

Was it written in Mongolian letters?

A

The Drepung laji, Sera laji and Ganden laji seals were written in Tibetan printing script. The lay and monk officials' general seal was square and was written in Mongolian letters (tib. horyig [hor yig]). It was a square seal on which "drungji" [tib. drung spyi] was written.

Q

Was that a black seal?

A

Yes. After affixing the seals, all the Trungtsi would stand up and go and present this document to the Kashag. Whenever the Assembly was in session, the Kashag must also be in session, as did the Jikyab Khenpo [tib. spyi khyab mkhan po]. After the documents were presented to the Kashag and Jikyab Khenpo, if they agreed to that, it was okay and the meeting would be adjourned. However, if they didn't agree, they would tell them to discuss it again.

Q

When it was sent back to discuss more, would the Assembly consider it again?

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A

When they wanted to make changes they could, but they could not simply cut and paste their additions or deletions on the original document. They could, however, write their changes on another piece of paper and stick this paper onto the original document (tib. jarshog [tib. sbyar shog]). Usually the Kashag wouldn't stick the correction paper unless it was a very important matter related to the religion and politics.

This revised document was then sent back to the Assembly for reconsideration. Normally, in most cases, the Assembly would agree with the changes of the Kashag. When they agreed to the changes, they would take the original document and write the rest on a separate piece of paper and stick it on the major document. However, this "stuck on paper" had to have two sets of seals -- one on the right side and the other on the left side. On the right side, the Drepung Laji's seal was affixed, ½ on the new sheet and ½ on the original sheet. On the left hand side, the Jidam of the officials was similarly affixed. This document would then be resubmitted to the Kashag for their consideration. The Kashag would not return the decision made by the Assembly unless it was really important because in most small matters they accepted whatever the Assembly decided. In any case, after that, the Kashag had to submit the document to the Silön, Regent, or Dalai Lama. Only after this had been done can it be said that the decisions were accepted officially.

It is customary at Assembly Meetings to serve tea continuously and serve [tsampa](#) dough [bag] once. Also, before the end of the meeting they always served [thukpa](#) [stew/soup] to the members, either a type of rice and meat soup called trumtsa [tib. dkrum tshag] or sometimes a type of food called guta which was meat and rice topped with curry powder.

Q

Would they serve boiled mutton?

A

That was served only on ceremonies, not regularly. The agenda for the meeting of the Assembly summoned after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama had two main points: 1) informing the members that the 13th Dalai Lama had died and also letting them know of the circumstances of his death, i.e. that the Kashag was not informed when the Dalai Lama first got sick, and 2) Stating that at this moment the young [Langdün](#) (the Silön) is

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only person in charge and asking the Assembly whether they want an assistant for him or whatever.

At that time there were 2 competing groups in the Assembly. One group was led by [Kapshöba](#) and was supported by Kunphela, the powerful favorite of the 13th Dalai Lama. This group's strategy was to try to get the Assembly to decide to make Kunphela the Assistant to the Silön, a position from which he would be the effective ruler. The second group was led by the lay official [Lungshar](#) [note: another favorite of the late Dalai Lama]. Their strategy was to try to demote [Trimön](#) and get [Lungshar](#) to become the assistant of [Langdün](#) and for the Assembly to approve a [new] Council of Regents which would include the present Silön [Langdün](#) and two new ones, one lay and one monk official. The lay official Regent would of course be [Lungshar](#). These contrary suggestions were the beginning of the conflict in the Assembly Meeting.

At this time [Kapshöba](#) and his group thought that Kunphela would be able to take power because he had the strong support of a new military regiment called the drondrag magar [tib. grong drag dmag sgar ("the Better Family Regiment")]. Because of this, [Kapshöba](#) himself spoke openly at the meeting. He said, "It was very unfortunate that the 13th Dalai Lama has died, however, it is common knowledge who was the one that the late Dalai Lama trusted, and what that trusted one has done in the past. Thus, we do not have to search to find a new person to take charge. There is someone already there." Meanwhile, at the same time, the [Lungshar](#) group was implementing a plan to neutralize the power base of Kunphela. They sent people to talk to the soldiers of the drongdrag regiment which was stationed in [Trapchi](#), just outside Lhasa. These agents told the soldiers [who hadn't wanted to serve at all], that now that the Dalai Lama has passed away and there is no danger to the country's security, it is an ideal time for you people to go back to your homes. If you don't take this opportunity, you may be stuck being soldiers for the rest of your lives. That message spread throughout the regiment and all the soldiers rushed to [Norbulinga](#) and complained that they wanted to go home. The Kashag said they would consider their demand and told them to go back to [Trapchi](#) and wait. However, the soldiers didn't do this, going instead [deserting] into the city of Lhasa. Thus, in one clever stroke, [Lungshar](#) neutralized the power base of his arch-enemy, Kunphela.

Note should be taken of one more important factor. At this time in the Kashag, the most powerful minister was the lay minister [Trimön](#).

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After the disintegration of the drongdrag regiment, Lungshar's forces got the Assembly to agree to send monk guards (gyakhag) immediately to [Trapchi](#) to protect it since it was the site of the Tibetan's government's mint, several treasuries, and arsenals.

They got the Assembly to request the Kashag to order the monk-security forces from Sera [which was near to Trapchi] to go at once and guard the place in the absence of the troops. [Lungshar](#) was probably able to do this because of the strong support he had from the monastic side, particularly from Sera monastery. However, [Trimön](#) saw through this scheme and got the Kashag to refuse it. Moreover, before he answered the Assembly, he ordered half of the 500 "Bodyguard" Regiment troops [tib. sku srung dmag sgar] to go at once to [Trapchi](#) and take over there. Then he had the Kashag send the Assembly a negative reply that said that even though the 13th Dalai Lama has died, the government has not been dissolved. Thus, there is no reason why the monks should have to take over at [Trapchi](#). The "Bodyguard" Regiment" was in Lhasa and the Kashag had ordered 250 of its troops to be moved to [Trapchi](#) immediately. Thus, by means of this strategy, [Trimön](#) thwarted Lungshar's attempt to gain control over the treasuries, mint, and armories via his monastic allies and his control of the Assembly.

At this time the [Lungshar](#) supporters initiated another plan to increase their control over the Assembly. They said that since these issues were so important, more people from the monasteries should be specially invited to join the Assembly meetings. The Assembly agreed and a number of monks were invited [by name] who were supporters of [Lungshar](#).

With regard to the suggestion made by the [Lungshar](#) forces that there should be a Council of Regents, [Kapshöba](#) and his group of Kunphela supporters initiated a strategy to counter this. They suggested that since we are Tibet and since Tibet is a Buddhist country, we have to have an incarnate lama as the Eegent so that we can have someone to whom we can bow down and do prostrations. We cannot have anyone else but a reincarnation lama. Since the main support for [Lungshar](#) was from the monastic side, this effectively split his support since the monks were happy to have an incarnate lama as the Regent. The monasteries, therefore, at once supported this idea and Lungshar's attempt to grasp power via a Council of Regents was blocked.

When they decided to have an incarnate lama as Regent, the traditional custom was to invite as candidates the [Ganden Tripa](#), any ex-Tripas, plus the incarnated lamas who had been regents in the past and held the title of Kyetrü Huthoktu [tib. skye sprul hu thog thu] as well as one or more other well-known other incarnate Lamas. At that time, there was only one ex-Tripa, Trisur Chamba Chödra [tib. byams pa chos grags]. And there was the

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present [Ganden Tripa](#), Minyag Ami [tib. mi nyag a mes]. Among the Huthoktu, the only one of appropriate age was Reting Huthoktu. Of well-known outside Lamas, they asked Phurbochog Rinpoche [tib. phur bu lcog]. From these initial candidates, the Trisur Chamba Chödra withdrew his name. The other three became the final candidates for selection. The selection process used was a form of the [senriy](#) divine lottery. Three barley dough balls were made with a slip of paper in each having the name of one of the candidates on it. This was placed in a bowl and rolled around. Whichever name fell out, that name [person] won and became Regent. Since Trisur Chamba Chödra was respected and was no longer in the running, so he was asked to roll the [senriy](#) dough balls. Reting Huthoktu's name fell out. I should add that this selection was done in the presence of all government officials and the abbots of the monasteries, including other lamas who held government status. When the ball popped out, the name was immediately read. Thus, the 13th Dalai Lama died on the 30th of the 10th Tibetan month and Reting was to be installed on the first day of the New Year. However, he had to share authority with Silön [Langdün](#).

Q

Was it a tradition to appoint representatives in addition to the abbots?

A

There wasn't any tradition about that. But that time there were many matters to be discussed at the meeting, so representatives were appointed in addition to the abbots. Getting back to the Assembly Meeting, as I mentioned earlier, on the instigation of the [Lungshar](#) forces, the Assembly had done something that had never been done before, namely, they had issued special invitations to specific monks to attend and participate in the meetings. Among the most important ones they wanted to get in the meeting was the monk known by the nickname Tigija ("big horse"). He was a monk from [Sera Me](#) College. These two were major supporters of [Lungshar](#). There were other similar types invited from Drepung.

The rivalry between [Trimön](#) and [Lungshar](#) was now very bitter. Since Lungshar's plans for the regency had been blocked, the only place upwards he could go was into the Kashag. To do this he would have to push out one or more of the current [Kalön](#). At this time, because Reting was still young, the two real powers in Tibet were [Lungshar](#) and [Trimön](#). [Trimön](#) controlled the Kashag since the other ministers may not have been as well versed as [Trimön](#). [Lungshar](#) virtually controlled the Assembly, although he never spoke openly

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at their meetings. Among his best spokesmen in the Assembly were the monk official Garjang Tenba [tib. mgar byang bstan pa] and the monk official Kongtrula [tib. kong phrug lags]. Thus [Lungshar](#) was thinking of pushing out [Trimön](#) and the monk [Kalön](#) Kundeling Gendün Chödar [tib. bka' blon bla ma dge 'dun chos dar] and to move himself up. To facilitate this, he established an organization he called Kyichog Küntün [tib. skyid phyogs kun mthun] ("All agreed on the side of happiness"). As I mentioned earlier, the [Kapshöba](#) group had lost all hope of getting Kunphela into power, and in fact, Kunphela was himself in danger because he had not informed the government about the Dalai Lama's illness until the end. Similarly, the [Nechung](#) Oracle and the doctor were in danger. [Kapshöba](#) was beginning to switch his loyalties to [Trimön](#) despite the fact that in the past he had been helped a number of times by [Lungshar](#) and had depended on [Lungshar](#) to help him get government positions.

The organization established by [Lungshar](#) had two documents: one public or outer document and one secret and inner document. In actuality, no one has ever seen the inner one except [Kapshöba](#) who claimed to have seen it. The public document stated the purpose of the organization was helping to see that a stupa will be built as soon as possible for the body of the 13th Dalai Lama. The other main function was to urge that the search for the Dalai Lama should start as soon as possible. There was also a third goal, to help to bring peace and happiness among Tibetans. These were the three major points in the public document. The inner (secret) document was said by [Kapshöba](#) to have advocated a new system of government in Tibet.

The inner document is said to have said that the system of government in Tibet is very old and is not adequate for modern times. [Trimön](#) and the [Kalön](#) Lama Gendün Chötra are not fit to be Kalöns because they are not honest, straitforward and are extremely nepotistic. They should be eliminated from government service. Also, instead of the Kashag being composed of three lay officials and one monk official, it should be changed to have four ministers, two monk officials, and two lay officials. Also, the inner document said that the Kashag has become too powerful. Its power should be separated, and a large portion of it given to the Assembly. Also, there was a proposal that a new constitution be written for Tibet. These were the points in the inner document which was shown to [Kapshöba](#). At that time, [Kapshöba](#) was young and smart and was on Lungshar's side.

Kapshöba intended to shift his loyalty to [Trimön](#) but outwardly acted as if nothing had happened and interacted with [Lungshar](#) as normal. Somehow, [Kapshöba](#) had gotten to see the inner document even though the [Lungshar](#) group did not trust him and had not



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made him a member of the "inner group." In this inner group of [Lungshar](#) were: Gajang Denba, Kongtrula, Chaba Rusur [tib. cha pa ru zur], Janglojen Gung, Menriwa [tib. sman ri ba], and Lhalu (Lungshar's son).

Q

At that time, the one called "twisted mouth" [another of Lungshar's sons] was not there, right?

A

He was not a lay official then.

Q

Since there was a monk [Kalön](#) (the [Kalön](#) Lama), how did [Trimön](#) had become the senior-most [Kalön](#) at this time?

A

It depended on the individual. Some of the monk [Kalön](#) sat highest, but it didn't mean that the monk [Kalön](#) had the most power or influence. Others, like [Tregang](#) [tib. bkras khang] [Kalön](#) Lama, didn't sit highest, but sat according to the seniority. It was really the [Ramba](#) [Kalön](#) Lama who later always sat highest.

Kapshöba was included in the outer circle of [Lungshar](#) and they didn't let him in the inner circle. So he wanted to show his support and allegiance to [Trimön](#) so he went to [Trimön](#) and explained to him that the times were not good now in Tibet. The Dalai Lama is no longer there and people are hungry for power and that even Trimön's life is in danger. Outwardly, Lungshar's party was for building the golden stupa and searching for the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, but internally they are plotting to kill [Trimön](#) and the [Kalön](#) lama. He explained the [Lungshar](#) "plot." [Trimön](#), however, had sent his own agents, notably, the official Shüküba [tib. shud gud pa] whose bride was Trimön's daughter, to infiltrate the [Lungshar](#) group. Thus, he had independent knowledge. After this, [Trimön](#) went immediately to the Regent and the Silön and told them how bad things are now and that if he [Trimön] stays in Lhasa, his life is in danger. He [Trimön] told them that he is going to flee to Drepung Monastery to avoid assassination. He said also that this threat to the administration of the Tibetan government had to be investigated carefully. [Trimön](#) left at once for Drepung [Loseling](#) College, Tsetang Khamtsen.

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It was customary that when one of the [Kalön](#) went to the monastery, all the [Laji](#) would go to see him and ask what brings him there. [Trimön](#) explained to them all the details of the [Lungshar](#) affair. He told them that he had a great deal of support in Lhasa especially from the Khampas at the Banagshö [tib. sbra nag zhol] area who even volunteered to act as his bodyguards. But, [Trimön](#) said, if I do this, there will be a great deal of fighting and bloodshed and thus I decided to come to Drepung for refuge. When he said this, he got a lot of support from the Drepung abbots, particularly the [Loseling](#) abbot Lhopa Khempo. The abbots agreed that since the [Kalön](#) are the real masters of the government, if his life is threatened there must be something very bad going on. They thought that the Regent and Silön should also be warned to be careful and to go ahead with the detailed investigation. Thus, the Drepung administration backed [Trimön](#) and went to the Regent and Silön who had already begun the investigation. However, with the open support of Drepung, their investigation was made much easier.

At this time, [Lungshar](#) was working under [Trimön](#) as the number two man on the project to build the stupa [tomb] of the 13th Dalai Lama. Since [Trimön](#) was not there, he [Lungshar] was the highest official on the project. Thus the Regent and the Silön sent a message to [Lungshar](#) asking him to come at once since there was something urgent to discuss regarding the construction of the stupa. When [Lungshar](#) came to the Potala, to the [shö ga](#) [tib. shol 'gag] [the Regent's Secretariat] to see the Silön and the Regent, he was met by the Regent's [nendrön](#) (aide) who was Punraba [tib. phun rab pa]. Punraba read an order to [Lungshar](#) which said that until now you have held a high position and enjoyed the patronage of the government. Yet you have tried to undermine and destroy that government. You have done undesirable things and have not appreciated the kindness of the late 13th Dalai Lama and the government. You are accused of serious crimes and it will be proved later whether or not they are true through a court of law. Until that time, your status as a government official is withdrawn and all your property is confiscated. The final decision will be made by the court. These were the brief charges read by Punraba.

As soon as Punraba started to read these, [Lungshar](#) ran away toward the back of the Potala where his servant was waiting with a horse. As he ran, the servant said, "Your Excellency, here, Your Excellency here!" [tib. kungo dei/ kungo dei] showing him a gun he had brought along. [Lungshar](#) had planned to ride his horse and run away to Sera but somehow [Lungshar](#) hesitated and didn't dare to take the gun. At that moment one of the monk bodyguards of the Regent (tib. [simgag](#) [gzim 'gag]) together with a sweeper, caught [Lungshar](#). These two saw him running and immediately chased after him. The Simgag got

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a hold of [Lungshar](#) from the back and flung him to the ground, smashing his head on the ground 3 or 4 times. Then he picked him up [the [simgag](#) are huge and very strong] and carried him back to Punrapa who completed reading the order.

It seems that [Lungshar](#) had had an inkling of the danger of going to the Potala and had made plans to run away by horseback to Sera monastery where he would stay in the [Sera Me](#) College. However, it was when he hesitated to get the gun that he was caught.

Punraba then said even more things to [Lungshar](#). He said that what you have just done was terrible. Even before the court hearing of the charges against you, you have shown disrespect to the Regent and the Silön. [Lungshar](#) was then arrested and put in detention in [Sharchenjog](#) [tib. shar chen lcog] in the Potala. However, at that moment, a group of [Lungshar](#) supporters led by Chaba Rusur tried to take [Lungshar](#) from out of custody by force taking some high quality tough young guys with them [tib. a phrug]. However, the Kashag had gotten prior warning about this and had put soldiers on duty so the [gang](#) of Lungshar's followers couldn't free him.

At the same time, [Kapshöba](#) was also arrested since it was he who was informing the government about the plot [as an insider]. He was demoted from both his position and from being a lay official [tib. las zhabs chabs cig] and he also was placed in [Sharchenjog](#) together with [Lungshar](#). It was the Tibetan custom when expelling an official from the government service to take off his official dress, his official shoes, and untie his hair-knot (tib. pajog [spa lcog]). When they took off Lungshar's shoe, they found a piece of paper in it which read, "Press down [Trimön](#) Norbu Wangyal" [tib. khri smon nor bu dbang rgyal non]. They took off his other shoe, but [Lungshar](#) grabbed another piece of paper and swallowed it. They tried to stick a finger in his mouth to grab it out, but they were unsuccessful and he swallowed it. Although no one knows what was written on it, they assumed it was magic directed against the Regent or the Silön. Thus [Lungshar](#) had an additional charge made against him that he was using black magic [tib. ngan gtad].

The investigation team [tib. khirms zhib pa] was picked by Regent and Silön and consisted of four officials: 1) [Lukhangwa](#) [tib. klu khang ba], 2) Dombo [tib. gdong por], 3) The [magji](#) Jangra [tib. lcang ra dmag spyi], and 4) Temba Jamyang [tib. bstan pa 'jam dbyangs] (who later became a [Kalön](#)).

[The following information was never said openly, but our subject heard it from Lungshar's girlfriend, the famous old Lady Lhalu. That person told our consultant that [Lungshar](#) said that when both he and [Kapshöba](#) were made to knee down and were interrogated, he had his hair knot untied and [Lungshar](#) was dressed like a prisoner.

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[Kapshöba](#) had his hair-knot untied, but he was allowed to continue to dress in his normal lay person's clothes. Moreover, [Lungshar](#) told [Kapshöba](#) that you depended on me for a long time and I'm sure I helped you a great deal. I don't deserve what you are doing to me." In other words, based on this information from Lungshar's girlfriend to our interviewee, it seems that [Lungshar](#), by virtue of the kind of treatment given to [Kapshöba](#) in jail, realized that [Kapshöba](#) had been the one to do him in.]

It was also said that [Lungshar](#) told the members of the investigation team that I have done nothing wrong myself. It was only [Kapshöba](#) who has created all of this in his own mind and instigated the Regent and the Silön so as to gain his own benefit. You have confiscated my house and you have gone through everything in my house. Have you found any documents or any things such as has been charged? If you have, then I have nothing to say. But you haven't because there are none. This is what [Lungshar](#) stated to the four investigators. Also it said that when [Lungshar](#) was talking to [Kapshöba](#), [Kapshöba](#) replied to [Lungshar](#) using the derogatory personal pronoun "kay." He said, "Kay, if you had helped me worth 5 Karma [that is half of a sho], I would have given you back the value of one [sho](#) for what you had done." In any case, this was not a time when one could repay a favor, because your activities have put the government, Ganden Podrang [tib. dga' ldan pho brang] in danger itself. So therefore I could not repay the favors you had done and could not keep my mouth shut. Moreover, he used the phrase, "Even though the sage became drunk, he would not exchange his skull cup for beer" [tib. rtogs ldan [chang](#) gis bzi yang/ ka li [chang](#) dang mi brje]. [Another translation is, "Even though the sage got drunk with [chang](#), he won't exchange his skull for the [chang](#)."] Also, it was said that the members of the investigation team wrote everything that was said by [Kapshöba](#) diligently and in detail, but when [Lungshar](#) explained his version, the members did not take very detailed notes and looked in disbelief and derision at what [Lungshar](#) was saying. Therefore, [Lungshar](#) told his girlfriend later that he had decided to keep completely silent until the decision was made. Also, when they were searching his house, they found nothing. They also found no documents in any of his followers' houses. However, there was talk saying that he had destroyed all of these documents before this happened. However, [Lungshar](#) claimed there was no document like that [Kapshöba](#) had said there was. Other confirmation of this came from Trimön's own sources of information, for example, Phunraba.

As for the second charge that he was doing black magic activities, some clues were found. They found a huge image of Gesar in front of which he had put many auspicious signs and also weapons of destruction. And there was a note saying, I put one for Norbu

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Wangyel [Trimön](#), put two for [Kalön](#) Lama Gendun Chödar. They also found a list which said, hit one, hit two, hit three (tib. [Trimön](#) Norbu Wangyel chig [gyab](#) nyi [gyab](#) [tib. gcig rgyobs gnyis rgyobs]).

Another talk going around Lhasa at this time was that [Lungshar](#) was really an incarnate lama of the Nyingmapa sect of Buddhism. [Lungshar](#) was quite skillful in doing the kind of divination called Tra [tib. pra] according to the tradition of Gesar.

Tra is a form of divination in which one looks in a mirror to determine the future. It said he did this Tra and in the mirror he saw one tiger and one snake fighting and fighting and fighting. Somehow in this fight, the tiger opened his mouth and the snake put his head in the tiger's mouth, and the tiger chewed it. [Lungshar](#) never considered this carefully enough. He considered the snake as a black, undesirable element. He considered the tiger as white, desirable element, that is what he wanted. He considered that vision as a victory sign for him. However what he didn't realize was that Trimön's animal year was the year of the tiger. [Lungshar](#) himself was born in the year of the snake. So he somehow overlooked that, and he took the images in the Tra to indicate that he would have some kind of victory later. This was the talk of the town at this time. [The talk of the town being that [Lungshar](#) had misread the tra divination.]

It was also the talk of the town at this time [Lungshar](#) had prepared to run away to Sera monastery, but was unable to do so. People were saying that had he been able to run away to Sera, he would not have been destroyed. This was what everyone in Lhasa agreed to at the time. The reason for this was that Sera would have given him protection, though they might not have fought because Reting also belonged to Sera. But even though they wouldn't fight, Sera would have try to gain some kind of negotiation with the government in order to settle the issue since [Trimön](#) was at Drepung. People thought that because of this some kind of acceptable solution would have been worked out between the monasteries.

The investigation team gave its decision even though Lungsher had never admitted to having any documents. The team gave its decision based on testimony from the monk officials Kongtrula and Gyalkhar Nangpa [tib rgyal mkhar nang pa]. These were people from Lungshar's group who made statements to the investigation team. They agreed to the charges that there was an inner document, etc. [This interviewee said that though they did not accept events exactly as [Kapshöba](#) had said, their other testimony corroborated the main points of Kapshöba's accusation against [Lungshar](#).]

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Another accusation made against [Lungshar](#) stems from documents found in the letters of the late Dalai Lama. They found a large number of notes sent by [Lungshar](#) to the 13th Dalai Lama. Particularly, these notes created misunderstanding between the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama. This was one of the major accusations against [Lungshar](#). There were also letters criticizing the members of the Kashag and even the Silön. These all were considered to be creating misunderstanding between the Dalai Lama and the other ministers in the government. This was considered to be a big crime. [Note: [Lungshar](#) was a very close favorite of the 13th Dalai Lama and would send notes to him at will. In fact, the 13th Dalai Lama used to send all issues that had to be decided, major ones, to [Lungshar](#) asking him to make suggestions regarding them. [Lungshar](#) would give these suggestions as jarshog (paper stuck with a note rather than written over). Another indication of his special status was that on picnics and at festivals, a special tent had to be provided for [Lungshar](#) so that he could think over things and write notes to the 13th Dalai Lama.]

The major crime charged against [Lungshar](#) was that he was trying to establish communist rule in Tibet. The 13th Dalai Lama had written that just as trouble had started in Mongolia, in Ulan Bator, it would happen in Tibet, and things would start both from within and without our country. This was the advice given by the 13th Dalai Lama before he died. So now [Lungshar](#) was said to be trying to do exactly this; he was trying to create a communist government in Tibet. This is written in a little pamphlet by the Dalai Lama called "Advice of the Water Bird Year." [also called "the Dalai Lama's Last Testament"]. On the basis of these crimes, the investigation decided that the punishment should be capital punishment. However, they decided that they had not yet recognized the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama, so if a person like [Lungshar](#) was killed, because people who are evil and powerful such as [Lungshar](#) in terms of wrong-prayerful-thinking [tib. log smon can] could harm the selection process. So they decided to do the next thing which was to gouge both eyeballs, because these are the best organ [tib. dbang po'i dwangs ma] and then imprison him in the Panding prison in [Shol](#). Simultaneously, the group of people who were working with [Lungshar](#) like Janglojan Gung, Kongtrula, Lhalu, Gajang Denba and Chapa Rusur, were removed from government positions and exiled to various places. Lhalu was placed in custody in the aristocratic family [Shatra](#). Each of these could no longer be treated as the real owner of their house and the house [in which they were placed] had to guarantee that whenever the government wanted them they will produce



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them and that they will cause no more trouble. They would enjoy the status of a servant. This was the verdict of the government.

As for [Lungshar](#) and his family, no one in his family could ever again become a government official - even the lowest level government official (tib. drungtog [drung gtogs]).

Q

What is the origin of [Lungshar](#)? Where did he come from? What is his history?

A

I don't know much about Lungshar's background. His estate is in Danak [tib. rta nag]. He was an ordinary government officer (tib. drung kyü [tib. drung dkyus]) and quite poor. Because of that, he was a very hard worker and was very good in writing and arithmetic, etc. He also knew medicine and astrology. He did many important things for the Tibetan government. For example, he instituted the new taxes on the newly opened lands called [babshi](#) [tib. 'bab zhib] which was a large tax on grain which fell on the large land owners and was used to support the newly created standing Tibetan army. He also made a detailed kind of investigation concerning the current status of many of the estates that had been given out by the government in long time past and he took back all of the estates from monasteries, lamas, and aristocratic families where either the families had died out and nobody was serving the government anymore or where monasteries were holding them without any real claim to them. Not only did he take them back, but he also charged these various units that held this land rent for the time they held it. He collected several hundred thousands of [khe](#) of grain by this method.

He was also very smart. He could back some people in a very clever way and he could also be malicious to people in the same way. Another one of the major things that he did which was at the core of the dispute between the Dalai and Panchen Lama, was that he decided that  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the expenses of the new army should be paid for by the Labrang of the Panchen Lama. The Panchen Lama's government said, "How can we pay  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the expenses of the military? If we are to pay  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the militaries expenses then we should have  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the resources of the Tibetan government or Tibet." That was the argument given by [Tashilhunpo](#). They said there are a large number of districts (dzong) available to the Tibetan government, but for [Tashilhunpo](#) there are only three estates; Lhatse [tib. lha rtse], Ngamring [tib. ngam ring], and Puntsoling [tib. phun tshogs gling]. So we can't meet the expenditures of the military regiments. This is what the Panchen Lama told the Dalai



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Lama. Also at this time, they said that since there is no way they can meet the requirement to pay ¼ of the military expenditures, the Panchen Lama was going to go to Mongolia and China to collect money and donations from all his followers in these areas. This was the excuse used by [Tashilhunpo](#) explaining why the Panchen Lama had to go away.

Lungshar also had become very wealthy in his own right because of his clever dealings. From ordinary lay officials he had been promoted to be [tsipa](#) [tib. rtsis pa] (secretary in the Tsikhang) so later he was always known as Tsipa [Lungshar](#). There is a lot of confusion about this because later he became a Tsipön, but this was not the same as Tsipa. He remained Tsipa for a very long time, so that even after he became Tsipön, he was still known commonly as Tsipa [Lungshar](#). After that, he had become a fourth ranking officer (rimshi) and during that time he went to England to take some Tibetan students to London. These students were Changöba [tib. bya dngos pa] who later became the head of the Lhasa Nyertsang [tib. gnyer tshang] (the office in charge of offerings and supplies). The second of the students who was sent to London was Möndrong Sherab Künsang [tib. smon grong shes rab kun bzang]. He became a monk official (a Jedrung [tib. rje drung]). There was another lay official called Gogsur [tib. sgog zur] and then also there was my relative Kyibu [tib. skyid bu]. Changöba started studying electrical studies. Möndrong started studying natural resources. Kyibu started in literature and Gogsur started with military training. At that time, [Lungshar](#) also took his wife with him to England. She was expecting the child who became Lhalu [Sawangchemmo](#). They were told at that time that if the child were born in London he would be blonde. So she went quickly back to India so that she would give birth to the child in India. Lhalu [Sawangchemmo](#), therefore, was born in Darjeeling or somewhere. Later on, [Lungshar](#) became the famous Tsipön and then after that he was appointed as the Consultant Commander-in-Chief (tib. [magji](#) tsonzin [tib. dmag spyi 'tsho 'dzin]), while he was a Tsipön.

Q

Was [Lungshar](#) the favorite of the Dalai Lama from the beginning?

A

He was doing his work very diligently knowing how to do things and the Dalai Lama liked the way he worked. The Dalai Lama would hand the plans submitted by the Kashag to [Lungshar](#) and he would stick opinions written on small pieces of paper and hand them

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back. Later, even the ministers found it difficult to make changes on what [Lungshar](#) had decided.

Q

I heard that during the lay officials' picnic [tib. drung spyi dbyar skyid], [Lungshar](#) had the privilege to have a private tent called surshug ugur [tib. zur bzhugs dbu gur], is that correct?

A

Yes. On all of the picnics, regardless of whether it was private or public, he had a separate tent because he used to receive messages written on the [samtra](#) message board and also plans from the Dalai Lama all of a sudden through the stable boys.

Q

When the final verdict or order would come out, would Lungshar's opinions [the notes he stuck on] remain on the plan?

A

No. They were always taken off and simply incorporated into the final documents so Lungshar's own writings were always taken away.

Q

How long did Lungshar's powerful period last?

A

His amazing period of power lasted for 13 or 14 years, until the Dalai Lama died.

Q

How old was [Lungshar](#)?

A

He was born in the Iron-Snake Year. My late father was born in Earth-Sheep Year and he was older than my father.

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Q

During this time, sometimes the Dalai Lama might have put him down [tib. mgo lcag gzhu], right?

A

I heard that the Dalai Lama felt glad when other people would challenge [Lungshar](#). Although the Dalai Lama liked him, he didn't let him do whatever he said. For example, at the time the [babshi](#) tax was instituted, there was an ordinary official called Langchungba [tib gnang byung ba] who was the Governor of [Tö](#) [tib. stod sgar dpon] in Western Tibet. In a letter he wrote to the 13th Dalai Lama he said, "Lungshar is very educated and very well versed, but I am a very poor man and have no way of meeting the taxes so the 13th Dalai Lama should kindly consider my poverty." The Dalai Lama was so impressed with Langchungba that he promoted him from fifth official [letsenpa] to [Kalön](#). In other words, he was looking to find people who would stand up to [Lungshar](#) and counter-balance him. When he was the Consultant to the Commander-in-Chief he often used to submit plans concerning the army straight to the Dalai Lama without even consulting the Commander-in-Chief. It is said that he used to make plans without any real basis or that didn't have any result in mind, but just wanted to show that he could influence events through the Dalai Lama. So the Dalai Lama then said, "You have done too many of these things and submitting plans without consulting Jangra [tib. lcang ra], the Commander-in-Chief, and you changed the dress of the army without getting my permission." Because of all this he withdrew his status as Consultant to the Commander-in-Chief of the army. [Lungshar](#) was just told to be the Consultant to the Commander-in Chief, and he didn't get any title, but he sat on the cushion of the third rank and wore a [hat](#) with the top tassel [tib. tog] and he also kept guards near his own gate. Furthermore, some of the guns were missing when he handed them over, so the Dalai Lama demoted from him from being Consultant to the Commander-in-Chief and told him, "Though [Lungshar](#) is not an incapable person, because of not having sincerity, he did those things." All of these were in the records of the Military Headquarters.

Another thing that [Lungshar](#) did was that one of the major jobs of the Tibetan government was to settle disputes among monasteries, aristocrats, and so on. Later there was a separate office created to deal with this called Gyöshib [tib. gyod zhib], but earlier there was nothing and these kinds of disputes were divided among various offices. Most of

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these disputes were referred to the Tsikhang and [Lungshar](#) was one of the senior Tsipön at the time. But even though there were four Tsipön, [Lungshar](#) would come to the office three times in a week, but used to not let anyone else look at the petitions or even read them. He used to lock up the dispute documents and look at them himself. He also wouldn't attend the Tsikhang everyday saying he had to tend to military matters one day and he had to attend to the [babshi](#) tax another day. So he used to send information out in advance that he was going to come to the office on such and such a day and all the people who had complaints or disputes would be waiting outside for him at this time. When he didn't come, he didn't let anybody even look at the petitions leave alone decide them. He locked up these documents and put a seal on them so they couldn't be opened and read. Therefore he would get a lot of bribes for settling the cases.

Q

How old was he when his eyeballs were gouged?

A

In the year of the Wood-Dog, [Lungshar](#) was 54. At that time his eyes were taken out as punishment.

Q

Did [Lungshar](#) ever become the head of a [dzong](#)?

A

I am not sure.

Q

Mostly, he stayed in Lhasa, right?

A

Yes.

Q

When he was working as the Tsipa, he had a salary estate (tib. thabten [tib. thab rten]). Usually, officials would lease out their salary estate. Basically, the government officials had

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such an estate and went to serve as the heads of dzongs, but they didn't have salaries, right?

A

In the early times, money was very valuable, so the salary was just converted into money like 30 [sang](#).

Q

Were there officials who got only money salary and not estates?

A

Basically, the salary was not that high. As for the [Shape](#), they received [tsamba](#), flour, tea, cooking oil, and [tsamba](#) for fodder, but this was just converted into money. One [khe](#) of [tsamba](#) was converted as just one [sho](#) [tib. zho], so verbally it was said that there was a salary, but in reality there was none [tib. kha yod [lag](#) med].

Q

This was kind of disgusting because it would make the officials not have any choice but to embezzle [tib. za] from the [miser](#), right?

A

Yes, the aristocrats had [family] estates, but the monk officials didn't have any choice but to embezzle from the [miser](#).

Q

Some of the monk officials had estates and there were also some ordinary lay officials who didn't have estates, right?

A

No. Only the new lay officials like Göshampa [tib. rgod gsham pa] and Sumdo [tib. sum mdo] didn't have estates. Otherwise, all the lay officials had estates.

Q

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Among the monk officials, there were just a few aristocrats who had estates like Phala, right?

A

Phala belonged to the lay officials [Note: He was from an aristocratic family]. There were monk officials like Trekhang [tib. bkraś khang], Möndrong [tib. smon grong], and Barshi Chukhor [tib. bar gzhis [chu](#) 'khor] who had estates.

Q

And there was also [Rampa](#). Did he belong to the lay officials?

A

Yes. Jawteng [tib. lcog steng] also had the estate called Rong Namse [tib. rong rnam sras]. The monk official who was the teacher of the Tarkhang School [tib. tar khang rgan lags] also had an estate called Rong Peling [tib. rong dpal gling]. The aristocrats were allowed to become either lay officials or monk officials, so when they had two sons, one of them would become a monk official and other would become a lay official. Therefore Phala and [Ramba](#) became monk officials.